

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the sugar mills are on the verge of closing down for want of sugarcane and coal;

(b) if so, how many such mills are facing this crisis; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to save these mills from such crisis?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): (a) Yes, Sir, due to shortage of sugarcane.

(b) A majority of factories in North India are experiencing shortage of sugarcane.

(c) The factories can pay a higher cane price than the minimum to attract more supplies.

Joint Steamer Companies

*21. { Shri P. C. Borooah:
 { Shri P. R. Chakraverti:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 402 on the 22nd January, 1963 and state:

(a) whether a meeting of the representatives of the Government of India, Pakistan and employers and employees of the Joint Steamer Companies has since been held; and

(b) if so, what matters were discussed and decisions taken therein?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Wagon Workshop, Matunga

*22. { Shri D. N. Tiwary:
 { Shri Subodh Hansda:
 { Shri S. C. Samanta:
 { Shri B. K. Das:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the incident of fire breaking out on the 21st January,

1963 in the Carriage Wagon Workshop of Matunga (C.R.) resulting in a heavy loss of the railway property has been enquired into; and

(b) if so, the result thereof?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Report of the Enquiry Committee is under examination.

Wool Production

*23. **Shri Bishanchander Seth:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation made a survey in India about the wool production;

(b) if so, the main suggestions put forward by them in regard to wool production; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to make India self-sufficient in wool?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) The F.A.O. have not made any survey on wool in India. F.A.O. specialists assigned to Rajasthan, U.P. and Assam for advising on sheep and wool programmes have, however, submitted reports on wool production in these States.

(b) The main recommendations relate to the establishment of sheep farms, adoption of improved management practices, research in selective and cross breeding, improvement of pastures and better sharing and marketing.

(c) The State Governments have established 48 sheep farms and 305 extension centres upto the end of the Second Five Year Plan. These will be further strengthened in the Third Plan, 15 additional sheep farms and

309 extension centres will be set up. The Government of India are establishing a Central Sheep Research Institute. In addition, several research schemes on wool have been sponsored. Sheep sharing and wool marketing programmes are being undertaken, to begin with, in Rajasthan.

University courses in Agriculture

*24. **Shri P. Venkatasubbalah:** Will Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to shorten the University courses in Agriculture to meet the needs arising out of National Emergency;

(b) whether Universities have been consulted in the matter; and

(c) if so, what are their reactions? be pleased to state:

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

Tourist Industry

*25. { **Shri D. C. Sharma:**
 { **Shri Heda:**

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tourist traffic and industry have been greatly hit due to the national emergency in India;

(b) if so, the extent thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to improve the situation?

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) and (b). Yes, to some extent. In November and December, 1962 there was a fall of about 7.1 per cent in tourist arrivals compared to the correspon-

ding figures for November and December, 1961.

(c) The steps to arrest the decline are under study.

Credit to Farmers through Co-operative Agencies

*26. **Shri P. R. Chakraverti:** Will the Minister of Community Development and Cooperation be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Governments have been advised by the Central Government to provide credit to agriculturists for production and land improvement works through co-operative agencies;

(b) what arrangements have been made to make available the funds routed through cooperatives at an interest rate not higher than the market rate; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to initiate some form of deposit insurance schemes to help cooperative banks augment their resources?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation (Shri Shyam Dhar Misra): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The state governments have been asked to ensure that cooperatives keep their lending rate as low as possible taking into account the extent of their owned funds, their borrowing rate, a reasonable margin for servicing the loans and the extent of Government subsidy received by them.

(c) The question whether and in what form deposits in cooperative banks should be protected is under consideration.

Reservation Rule

27. **Shri Indrajit Gupta:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of genuine hardship caused to passengers by the new rules regarding cancellation of railway reserved accommodation;